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 31. The method of Claim 26, wherein introducing the volume of the indicator into the conduit includes introducing the volume of indicator upstream of an area sensed by the optical sensor.

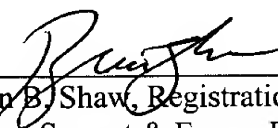
32. The method of Claim 26, wherein the liquid characteristic is blood hematocrit.

33. The method of Claim 26, wherein optically sensing the liquid characteristic change includes obtaining a value proportional to blood hematocrit in the conduit.

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the foregoing amendment prior to an initial substantive examination of the above-referenced application. If the examiner has any questions or concerns, the examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned so that such matters may be promptly resolved.

Respectfully submitted,



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